

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 10, 2014

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
WORKS
INDIAN AFFAIRS
SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Honorable Jay Rockefeller
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, & Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, & Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Member Thune:

As you know, several high-profile data breaches have occurred in recent weeks that have had an incredible impact on millions of consumers across the country. The number and the scope of these breaches leave consumers feeling vulnerable and scared that their personal information is at risk. In fact, identity theft has been the number one consumer complaint at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for the last 13 years in a row, and these massive data breaches are a contributing factor.

While several other congressional committees may explore ways to narrowly update certain data security and breach notification laws, the Senate Commerce Committee has the broadest jurisdiction to make a real impact. The Senate Commerce Committee has jurisdiction over most of the U.S. economy – including most of the online economy – and it has a history of being active on data security protection issues in the past.

If the recent data breaches on Target, which has 14 stores in my home state of Nebraska, and the popular mobile application, Snapchat, have taught us anything, it is that our nation's entire data security framework is in desperate need of revamping. That will require congressional action and attention from our committee. Smart policy that results from an open, collaborative process with input from security experts, consumers, and businesses is the answer – not fresh reams of red tape. We also need to explore whether having a comprehensive federal data security and breach notification law might help mitigate these breaches and their impact on consumers. I encourage you to schedule hearings as soon as possible so we can minimize the impact these data breaches are having on consumers and our economy.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



Deb Fischer
United States Senator